THANKSGIVING SERMON for the Victory of Great Britain at the BATTLE OF THE NILE

Preached in the Cathedral at Quebec, January 10th, 1799,—by MONSEIGNEUR PLESSIS, Curé (afterwards Bishop) of Quebec. Translated from the French by Sir HENRI JOLY de LOTBINIERE, K. C. M. G.

Dussault & Proulx, Print. Quebec 1906

Thanksgiving Sermon for the Victory of Great Britain at the Battle of the Nile, preached by Bishop Plessis, January 1799

THANKSGIVING SERMON for the Victory of Great Britain at the BATTLE OF THE NILE

Preached in the Cathedral at Quebec, January 10th. 1799,—by MONSEIGNEUR PLESSIS, Curé (afterwards Bishop) of Quebec. Translated from the French by Sir HENRI JOLY de LOTBINIERE, K C. M. G.

Dussault & Proulx, Print. Quebec 1906

Copies can be obtained from

Miss PETRY

18, rue St-Denis

QUEBEC

From H. SOTHERAN & Co.

140, Strand

LONDON

PRICE : ONE SHILLING

67396

CONTENTS.

PAGES

PREFACE 9

SERMON 11

CHRONOLOGY 31

NOTES

Influence on Plessis of Bishop Briand . . . 34

Duke of Kent's objection to Plessis 35

Sir Robert Peel on Canada in 1810 35

The Government Secretary at Quebec on Plessis 36

Plessis on the American invasion of 1813 . . 36

Lord Bathurst on Canadian Catholic Claims . 37

Lord Dalhousie on the death of Plessis . . . 37

Mermet's verses on Plessis 38

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Biographies of Plessis 39

Writings of Plessis 39

PREFACE

One who has devoted much time to the great task of bringing into closer union the distant parts of the Empire, by making them better acquainted with their own past, and who, in his researches, has met with many interesting records now buried in oblivion, has asked me to translate from the French the sermon preached by Monseigneur Plessis, in the Cathedral of Quebec, on the 10th. January 1799, a day specially appointed as a Thanksgiving Day, for the victory of England, over the French fleet, at the Battle of the Nile.

When it will be remembered that the Reverend Preacher as well as his Congregation were French Canadians, it may surprise those who overlook at what time and under what conditions this sermon was preached.

Only a few years before that time, the Canadians, after a long and heroic resistance, with little help from France, had, at last, been compelled to give up the struggle.

They had been faithful to France as long as they were able to keep her flag floating over their

heads. They have, ever since, been faithful to England, who, on her side, has faithfully carried out the terms of the treaty under which Canada had been surrendered to her.

If there is one thing more than any other, which the French Canadians treasure, it is their religion. They cannot forget what they owe to England for its preservation, in the past, and, less than ever are they likely to forget it, at the present time.

HENRI G. JOLY DE LOTBINIÈRE.

Quebec, 17 September 1906.

SERMON.

Dextera tua, Domine, percussit inimicum.
"Thy right hand, O Lord, hast dashed in pieces the enemy"
Exodus XV. 6.

EXORDIUM. NOTHING happens here below except by the order or the permission of God. To ascribe to man, to his ability, his bravery, his experience the success or the failure of his undertakings would be to ignore the Sovereign Wisdom of Him who from His Eternal Throne, ordains, according to His Pleasure, the fate of States and Empires, and often decides that there shall be nothing absolutely certain but uncertainty, and the instability which tosses them without ceasing. If Pharaoh and his army are buried under the waves of the Red Sea; if Sennacherib is compelled to raise hurriedly the siege of Jerusalem; if Holoforne's troops retire disgracefully from before Bethulia, it is neither Moses, nor Hezekiah nor

Judith who are to be credited for these great triumphs. It is the hand of God alone which performs all these great deeds, "*dextera tua, Domine, percussit inimicum.*" Therefore it is to the glory of Admiral HORATIO NELSON to have been chosen as the instrument in the hands of the Almighty to humble a government both unjust and overbearing. But who among us, my brethren, is so ignorant of the principles of his religion not to trace back to God all the success of the arms of this wise and illustrious warrior?

It is therefore to you, O Lord, that are due our acclamations and our thanksgivings. It is in your Temple that will rise, to-day, our allelujas and our chants of victory: "*Vota mea, Domino, reddam in atriis domûs Domini.*"

Proposition.—Far from us, Christians, that profane and earthly joy which will perhaps fill, on this day, the thoughts of the children of this world. Let us find our joy in the Lord. Let us thank Him for the great benefits that will flow from the glorious success which we have met this day to commemorate; let us not consider with indifference an event with which our interests of every kind are so closely connected.

Division.—For whoever will consider in its true bearing the victory won in the first days of August last by the fleets of His Britannic Majesty must admit, *First*: that this victory humbles and confounds France. *Secondly*:

that it adds lustre to the glory of England and crowns its generosity. *Thirdly*: that it guarantees specially the happiness of this Province.

Let us seriously consider these three points, let us once more repeat with thanksgiving: It was Thy hand, O Lord, that struck down our enemy. "*Dextera tua, Domine, percussit inimicum*".

CONFIRMATION

First point.—Does it not appear painful to you, my brethren, to have to call "enemies" a nation to which this Colony owes its birth, a nation which for such a long time has been united to us by the close ties of blood, of friendship, of trade, of language, of religion, which has given us fathers, protectors, governors, priests, perfect patterns of all virtues, cherished Sovereigns whose wise and moderate rule was such a source of joy to us and deserved all our affection and gratitude.

Such was France as we once knew her, beloved by her children, dreaded by her enemies, faithful to her religion, respected by every nation of the world. Did she not deserve, on so many grounds, the regrets you expressed on being separated from her and your generous efforts to remain under her rule? But since God, in his mercy, has placed us under another rule, great Heavens! what a fatal change has that unfortunate kingdom undergo-

ne! The evil one, evidently jealous at finding the rule of God so firmly established, crept in the darkness of the night, I mean with the deceitful artifices of a false philosophy, and smothered under poisonous weeds, unholy productions, incendiary publications the whole surface of our prosperous and fertile country. The bad seed has germinated; impiety and immorality have taken root, the minds, the hearts, have allowed themselves to be drawn away by the seductive charms of a religion without dogma, of a so called morality with no true rule to guide it. The bewitching expressions of reason, liberty, philantropy, fraternity, equality, toleration were seized upon with avidity and echoed by every mouth. Favored by them, the spirit of independence and unbelief built up a fatal empire. The sovereign authority of the King was called tyranny; religion fanaticism, its holy practises superstition, its Ministers impostors, and even God Himself a chimera.

These barriers once broken my brethren what becomes of man? Abandoned to his depraved reason, is there any sin of which he is not liable to become guilty? You can judge by those of our fellow citizens whose misfortune it has been to have been influenced by the monstrous principles of such men as Diderot, Voltaire, Mercier, Rousseau, Volney, Raynal, d'Alembert and other deists of our time. Have they become better husbands, more worthy fathers, more dutiful sons, more honest citizens,

more sincere friends, more faithful subjects? No, my Christian brethren, such trees could only produce unwholesome detestable fruit. But if individuals infatuated with the system of the times become so obnoxious to society, what fatal destruction must have been committed in France by that impious and sacrilegious horde who have risen in such numbers against the joint existence of religion and of royalty, and have formed a fatal conspiracy for the destruction and extermination of both?

No, gentlemen, we need not look further than irreligion for the immediate cause of the French Revolution. Here is the accursed power which has, for a long time, worked it into shape, nursed it secretly and with caution, and ultimately brought it into life in the midst of the most fearful tumult. A terrible explosion; it made the earth tremble, poisoned the air with its pestilential breath, shook all the thrones and threatens to devour with its fire all the churches of the world.

Instantaneous revolution! It discovered the fatal secret of electrifying in one moment nearly the whole of mankind. Scarcely did it break out in the Capital before it had reached the most remote Provinces of France. Everywhere the cry of despositism is heard! Everywhere the bonds of discipline are torn asunder! The middle classes arise against the highest in order to more effectually oppress the lowest. The authority of the law is despised,

private property is pillaged, brute strength sets aside the most ancient and legitimate rights.

Victorious revolution. At first it was not to spread its so-called reforms beyond the boundaries of France. But before long, like a torrent overflowing its banks, it has flooded all the neighbouring countries: the Low-Countries, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Germany have become one after another the theatre of a terrible war declared against so called despots, but in reality carried out by the most cruel and hateful tyrants.

Sanguinary revolution. It began with fire, continued with massacres and to accelerate them it invented a novel instrument of death. How many heads, alas! have fallen under its cruel blows. Princes, Priests, Noble Royalists, it has been your lot to undergo the same fatal experience. What shall I say? Among the revolutionaries themselves, how many leaders have not suffered for their crimes with the loss of their lives!

The most religious, the most gentle of Kings has become for it an object of implacable hatred. What! was it not enough to lower him below his own subjects by means of a Constitution as illegal and absurd in form as monstrous in principle? Was it further necessary to drag him violently out of his ancestral palace, keep him under strict guard at the Tuileries, imprison him in the Temple, try him like a political prisoner; carry him to the

scaffold, and ignominously behead him for imaginary crimes? O Louis the sixteenth? O King so deserving of a longe life! if an early death had not been for you a happier fate than a life of prolonged tribulation and bitterness! But God, my brethren, had resolved to reward this truly Christian prince for his sublime virtues, and, no doubt, this is why He raised against him the rage of those who had usurped his sovereign authority.

Sacrilegious Revolution. No excess however great has stopped them. Churches proscribed, religious monuments broken to pieces, priests slaughtered near the altars they were attempting to defend, divine worship stopped, the Sacred Mysteries trampled under foot, the holy feast days abolished, the idol erected in the temple of the true God, the holy virgins driven from their cherished asylums, the Head of the Catholic Church, worthy venerable successor of the Apostles, cruelly torn from his episcopal seat, compelled in his extreme old age to wander from town to town until such time as it would please God to reward a life full of virtue, of holy work and of merit with a crown of glory. All this, my brethren, is but a short description of the atrocities perpetrated by the propagators of the French Revolution. How long, O Lord, will you suffer them to insult you? *usquequo, Domine, improberabit inimicus?* What will you not put a curb to their audacity? Do, at last, lift up your all powerful

hand to repress it, *leva manus tuas in superbias eorum in finem.*

The day has arrived, my brethren. This proud Pharaoh, this ambitious Nebuchadnessar this insolent Goliah is now beginning to lose ground. Go, you nation, hitherto considered invincible. Equip a powerful fleet. Undertake to conquer the East! Publish, before hand, victories which will not be realised. Glory in of the strength of your ships and the multitude of your troops. God who, to punish the world, has made use of you as of an avenging flail, will not delay long make to you feel how heavily His arm can fall on the ungodly! In your turn you will be surprised, surrounded, conquered, in a manner, most startling most fit to delight Africa and Asia, whose destruction you have begun. Whatever resources you may still pretend to control, you will beunable to conceal the humiliation entailed by such an immense as well as unexpected loss.

What was the purpose of Providence, my brethren in destroying by this defeat, the French fleet on the Mediterranean? Has it merely meant to disconcert and confound our enemies? Has it further meant to restore confidence to the worthy citizens who, for nearly ten years, deplored, in secret, the blindness of their unfortunate country? It is idle for us to conjecture. But so much appears certain, that Providence has chosen, by this brilliant victory

to add to the glory of England and to reward her generosity.

Second point.—For a long time an earnest spectator of the heart-rending deeds that desolated France, England prudently hesitated to take part in a quarrel, the issue of which it was impossible to foresee. On one side rebellious subjects putting forth every effort to destroy legitimate authority; on the other a sovereign seeking by voluntary concessions to calm the fury of the dissatisfied. On one side decrees without number, all tending towards the establishment of a monstrous system of anarchy; on the other either silence or a readiness to adopt them which appeared to betray the good cause and concur with innovation. On one side numerous cries of Long live the King! on the other measures which aimed at nothing less than at despoiling him of all authority and ultimately at putting an end to his life. On one side promises of limitless liberty to all French citizens, and on the other innumerable massacres under the most trifling pretexts which too clearly betrayed the true meaning of the Revolution. In the midst of all this, the King was still alive, although a captive and the diversity of opinion among his subjects led to hope that, at any moment, order would be happily restored.

Such however was not your will, great God! The sins of this unfortunate nation had cried out too loud. Too long had they provoked your

anger! But in making it felt among the criminal dwellers in the cities of the Kingdom, you prepared, in the generous hospitality of a neighbouring State, a safe and friendly asylum for the righteous remnant. For this was the first proof of the active interest felt by England in the French Revolution, and very likely the real cause of the war that she soon had to support against the perfidious authors of that Revolution. But, without calculating the risks, come, said that generous nation, come, you worthy remnant of a nation which has always been our rival, but whose courage we have always honored, and whose virtue we have always respected. Venerable Prelates and holy Clergymen of a religion which we no longer recognize; descendants of the ancient heroes of France, men of every class whose love for duty has brought misfortune you who have given up your positions, your titles, your seats of honor, your estates, rather than betray your conscience and consent to the tearing down of the altar and of the throne; —come, we offer you a new home in aland foreign to you. Come and share with us our hearths, our fortunes, our industry, our abundance. If you do not recover among us all that you have lost, you will, at least, receive some compensation toward consoling you in your exile and lightening your misfortunes. Long ago the Prophet said: never have I seen the righteous forsaken: *Non vidi justum derelictum.* Emi-

grants from France, you are experiencing today the warmth of our welcome. But by whose hands does Heaven offer you the most abundant help? The hands of a nation always your rival and with interests antagonistic, a nation which honestly appears to hate you, but nevertheless, in your misfortunes can see in you only suffering brothers. *Salutem ex inimicis nostris et de manus omnium qui oderunt nos.*

Furthermore, my brethren, while England offers a helping hand to the victims of The Revolution and loads them with generous befactions at the same time she stops to a certain degree the convulsion with which the whole world is threatened by the fierce agents of the Revolution. Not only do the wise men at the head of public affairs in England provide for the maintenance of order, at home, and check any dangerous tendencies to disorder, more than that I see how willingly she accepted the declaration of war offered her in 1793 by those men who had usurped sovereign authority in France. How much enthusiasm, strength and energy has she displayed to carry on the war honor. Formidable armaments, numerous troops on the continent, redoutable fleets on the sea, money sent to the Allies, new taxes on the whole Kingdom, voluntary contributions from individuals, promise of promotion in the army and navy; everything has been attempted for that noble end.

Nations of Europe, States and Provinces of

America, wealthy dependencies in the East Indies all of you wisely set your hopes on England. She is the great rampart behind which are resting all your hopes. If she succeeds, her triumph will be your salvation and will secure peace for you: if she fails, there is an end to your peace and to your Governments. The fatal tree of liberty (*l'arbre de la liberté*) will be planted on the public squares, in your cities; the rights of man (*droits de l'homme*) will be proclaimed there; forced contributions will exhaust your finances; your laws will become a plaything in the hands of the haughty enemies of mankind; you will share all the evils which make you pity the fate of France. You will be free, but your freedom will be slavery, which will give you for masters the dregs of the people, and trample in the dust the worthy leaders who are now honoured with your love and your confidence.

But what am I saying? No, Great God, you will not refuse to grant success to our arms, and since it is your cause that we are defending, arise, O Lord, scatter your enemies; put to flight those who hate you. Let them disappear, like smoke, let them melt like wax before the fire: *Sicut fluit cera a facie ignis, sic pereant peccatores a facie Dei.*

This, gentlemen, is what will happen; abandoned by its strongest allies, Great Britain will, almost alone, bear all the weight of this formidable war. See her multiplying her fleets

and sending them sweeping over the Ocean with an air of superiority which befits but her. Sometimes she unites them, sometimes she divides them; sometimes she moves them from one hemisphere to another, but with an incredible activity and forethought. One protects the coasts of America, another helps to conquer the Cape of Good Hope; this one convoys the rich produce from India, the other watches over the shores of Ireland. Another after defeating the fleet of Spain shuts it up in a Spanish port. Another blockades all the enemy's harbours, and prevents him from getting out. Another is covered with glory by the defeat of the Dutch. If successes are able to give hope, my brethren, there can be no doubt about these and they are well calculated to keep up the energy of England. But at last a blow more decisive, a victory yet more signal awaited the arms of England. Heaven could not defer any longer to reward her generosity and to compensate her for her numberless efforts. The fearless Admiral Nelson, with a squadron inferior in numbers both of men and ships, but bold enough to attack the French Mediterranean fleet has gained one of the most complete naval victories known to history. Nine war ships taken, one sunk, three burnt, the rest scattered, numerous transports driven ashore and lost: such is the memorable event that we celebrate on this solemn occasion. Was it not right that a day should so be spe-

cially appointed to return thanks to the God of Battles?

Where is the true patriot, where is the loyal subject, I will say more, where is the sincere Christian whose heart has not rejoiced over these good news? The empire of the waters assured to Great Britain, her flag waving triumphantly over all the seas, her enemies confounded and humiliated, a peace for which the whole world sighs now made more easy. These considerations alone are they not sufficient to fill all souls with joy? Let me add that this victory has for us a special value, because in confirming the power of England, it guarantees to this Province a continuance of peace and happiness.

Third point.—Which is, gentlemen, the form of government best calculated for our happiness but that which is founded on moderation, which respects the religion of the country, which is full of consideration for its subjects, which gives the people a fair share in Provincial administration? Such has always been the action of the British Goverment in Canada. This is not a case of flattery cowardly waving its censer in worship of the powers that be. God forbid, my brethren, that I should profane the sanctity of this pulpit by base adulation or by interested praise! It is an acknowledgment imperatively demanded by truth as well as by gratitude and I do not fear any denial from those who understand the spirit of the British

Government. A wise deliberation governs its actions. No hurry in its steady progress. Do you trace there this deceptive enthusiasm, that thoughtless love for novelty, that unbridled liberty acknowledging no limit and overturning before our eyes states without secure foundation? What consideration has it not for private rights, what ingenuity does it not display in adjusting the burden of taxation so that it is scarcely felt! After forty years of conquest, do you hear any complaints of those tithes taxes and endless capitations under which so many nations groan, of those arbitrary demands for immense sums which an unjust conqueror haughtily exacts from the unhappy vanquished? Have you ever suffered, by want of foresight of the Government from the famines which once afflicted the Colony and of which one can only remember the details with horror and shudder? On the contrary in years of scarcity, have you not seen the Government wisely stopping the export of grain until your own wants had been provided for? Since the conquest, have you been subjected to military service, compelled to leave in want your wives and your children, and go and fight in distant lands the enemies of the State? Have you contributed, in the slightest degree, to the heavy cost of the war that Great Britain is carrying on for nearly six years? Nearly the whole of Europe is a prey to the sword, to fire, to slaughter, the most holy asylums are violated,

the virgins dishonored, and in many places the mothers and the children slaughtered. Do you even notice all these dreadful events? May it not be said that in the very worst days of war, you are enjoying the full benefit of peace? To whom after God, do you owe all these blessings, my brethren, but to the fatherly vigilance of an Empire which, in peace as in war, takes to heart I venture to say your interests more than its own? On every side I find proofs of that; your criminal Code, for instance, was too severe, not offering sufficiently safe rules to distinguish between innocence and guilt, not shielding the weak against the oppression of his powerful enemy. That law was replaced by the criminal laws of England, that triumph of the human intellect, which shuts the gates against calumny, which acknowledges as criminal only such actions which violate the law, as guilty only such whose guilt has been clearly proved, which affords to the accused all the resources of a legitimate defence, leaving nothing to the discretion of the Judge and dealing punishment only in the exact measure laid down by the law. Furthermore, while in France all the local laws (*Coutumes*) are set aside, all the ordinances bearing marks of Royalty are abolished, is it not wonderful to see a British Province ruled by the "Coutume de Paris" and by the edicts and declarations of the Kings of France? What is the cause of this singular and flattering distinction? It

comes from the fact that you have desired these ancient laws to be returned to you, and that they have been deemed more in harmony with the conditions and the tenure of lands in this country. Such laws are preserved to you, subject only to such alterations as the Provincial Legislature may choose to introduce a Legislature in which you are represented in an infinitely larger proportion than the people of the British Isles, in the Parliaments of Ireland and of England.

What thanks, gentlemen, do we not owe for so many benefits? A heartfelt sentiment of gratitude towards Great Britain, an ardent desire never more to be separated from her: an entire conviction that her interests are not different from ours; that our happiness is bound up with hers, and that if at times we have had to mourn over her reverses, we should equally rejoice on this day, at the glory she has won, and look upon her last victory as an event, no less satisfactory to ourselves than glorious for her.

Christians, what if to these political considerations you add another, one that above all others entitles this Empire to your gratitude and praise? I allude to the liberty assured to our religion and guaranteed by law; to the respect shown those whose lives are spent in our monasteries, to that uninterrupted succession of Catholic Bishops, who have always enjoyed the favour and confidence of the

King's representatives, to that unfailing protection enjoyed both in town aud country by those whose sacred duty it is to watch over the preservation of faith and morals. If this faith my brethren grows feeble amongst us, If our morals relax it ought not to be attributed to the change in the ruling power but solely to yourselves, to your lack of submission to the principles that we endeavour to instil in your hearts, to your foolish striving after a freedom which you now enjoy, without knowing it, to the poisoned arguments of those devoid of character and principles, to those endless grumblers, who take offence at the maintenance of law, who look upon obedience as a humiliation and upon religion as an outrage.

Alas, my brethren, where should we be if such men got the upper hand, if their aspirations were fulfilled, if this country through a lamentable misfortune fell, once more, under the power of its former rulers? House of God, venerable temple, you would soon be changed into a den of thieves! Ministers of a holy religion, you would be discharged proscribed and perhaps beheaded! Fervent Christians, you would be deprived of the ineffable consolations which you enjoy in the fulfilment of your religious duties! Land made holy by the tears and sweat of so many virtuous missionaries, land into which they have sown faith, henceforward thou wouldst offer to the true believer but a melancholy and endless

solitude! Catholic fathers and mothers, you would see with your own eyes your beloved children suck, notwithstanding all your efforts, the poisoned milk of barbarity, impiety and immorality! Tender infants, whose innocent hearts still breath but virtue, your piety would become the prey of these vultures, and a brutal system of education would soon efface from your souls the precious feelings which humanity and religion have engraved there.

Conclusion.—But why should I deal any longer with these painful thoughts, in a day which should be entirely devoted to joy? No, my brethren! Let us not fear that God should forsake us, if we remain faithful to him. That which he has just done for us should inspire us with nothing but hope for the future. He has laid low our perfidious enemies. Let us rejoice over this glorious event. All that weakens France tends to increase the distance between us, and assures our lives, our liberty, our peace, our home our faith, our happiness. Let us render our thanksgivings to the God of victory. Let us intreat Him to long preserve the benevolent and august Monarch who reigns over us, and to pour over Canada his most abundant blessings.

Te Deum laudamus, etc.

CHRONOLOGY.

1763 Feb. 10th—Treaty of Paris, granting the liberty of the Catholic Religion to the Canadians.

1763 March 3rd—Joseph Octave Plessis, born at Montreal.

1783 October—Plessis made Diocesan Secretary to Mgr Briand, Bishop of Quebec.

1786 March 11th—Plessis made a priest.

1789 November 18th—Statement signed by Bishop Hubert against a proposal for an undenominational university at Quebec—(Compiled by Plessis)

1792 June 2nd—Plessis made Curé of Quebec, but continuing as Diocesan Secretary.

1794 June 7th—Plessis preached funeral sermon on Bishop Briand.

1797 Sept. 6th--Plessis chosen coadjutor bishop by Bishop Denault with approval of General Prescott, Lt.-governor.

October 16th—Duke of Kent's letter on the doubtful loyalty of Plessis.

1798 February 20th—Pope Pius VI removed from Rome.

June 8th—Plessis thanks Ryland (the Government Secretary) who had "smoothed the way" for his appointment as coadjutor bishop.

Augt 1st—Battle of the Nile.

1799 January 10th.—Plessis preaches sermon on the Battle of the Nile.

Aug 29th—Death of Pope Pius VI.

1800 March 14th.—Election of Pope Pius VII.

April 26th.—Papal bull approving Plessis as coadjutor bishop of Quebec.

1801 January 25th.—Plessis consecrated as coadjutor bishop.

[illegible] January 17th.—Plessis becomes Bishop of Quebec on the death of Bishop Denault.

1807 September 16 } Plessis issues loyal proclamations.
1810 March 21 }

1811 May & June.—Plessis has conversations with governor Sir John Craig. Plessis claims recognition of catholic bishopric and right of nominating curés.

July-September.—Plessis visits Maritime Provinces.

November 11th.—Ryland writes to Mr. Peel, Under Secretary of State for Colonies, that Plessis would not be actively disloyal.

1812 April 9.—Plessis issues loyal proclamation.

May 15th.—Plessis gives Sir George Prévost memorandum on the status of Canadian Catholic Bishops.

June-Sept.—Plessis visits Maritime Provinces.

October 29th.—Plessis orders thanksgiving for British victories in Europe and America.

1813 April 22nd—Plessis orders prayers for victory.

July 2nd.—Lord Bathurst recognizes Plessis as Bishop.

July 8th.—Plessis orders thanksgivings for British victories in India, Europe and America.

November 11th.—Plessis issues a call to arms to resist invaders from the United States, and orders non-combatants to pray for victory.

1814 March 31st.—Plessis orders thanksgivings for victories to be offered on April 21st, the feast day of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, " to whose

powerful intercession the glorious victories of the British Empire are perhaps partly due."

1814 August 22nd.
1815 March 10th.
1816 April 29th.
} Plessis orders thanksgivings for victories and treaties of peace in Europe and America.

1815 May 9th.—Plessis directs the clergy to dispel prejudice about vaccination.

1815
1816
} Summer visits to Maritime Provinces.

1817 April 30th.—Plessis appointed Legislative Councillor.

1818 January 15th.—Plessis in a farewell pastoral to the Catholics of Nova Scotia on the appointment of a bishop, recites how the Acadians had "foolishly persuaded themselves that their religion could not be secured under a protestant government."

March 29th—Plessis invites subscriptions for a permanent mission at Red River—Lord Selkirk assists.

1819 July 3rd—Plessis leaves Quebec on a voyage to Europe.

1820 Aug. 16th—Plessis returns to Quebec.

August 31st—Plessis gives an account of the results of his voyage to the clergy in the cathedral.

1822 December 5th—Plessis issues fuller account of the results of his voyage.

1825 Dec. 4th—Plessis dies at Quebec.

NOTES.

Influence on Plessis of Bishop Briand —1715-1794.

"It was under a master so able and virtuous (Bishop Briand) that Plessis formed his views of the sacerdotal character and acquired without effort that varied information which subsequently became so useful to him in the direction of the affairs of the diocese of Quebec. In his conversations with the old Bishop he gathered much valuable information upon the causes which had brought about the fall of the French government in Canada and upon the men who directed the affairs of the colony before it had been ceded to England. These conversations, doubtless, had their influence on the opinions that M. Plessis formed touching the merits of the two governments. In considering the system of vexatious trickery organised against the church and the people of the country by some of the chiefs and subordinate employés who were sent by the court of Louis XV at that time under the sceptre of Madame Pompadour, he could not but admit that under the English Government the Catholic Clergy and rural population enjoyed more liberty than was accorded to them before the conquest."

Ferland's Life of Plessis, page 14.

Duke of Kent's objection to Plessis' title.

"As to the coadjutor Plessis, I believe it my duty to inform you that he is a man in whom you will find perhaps that it is not prudent to repose too much confidence. I knew him while he was secretary to Bishop Hubert, and it was well known during my residence in Canada that he entirely governed the Bishop and the Seminary, and induced them to adopt opinions quite incompatible with our ideas of the supremacy of the King in ecclesiastical affairs".

.....

"I know that while I resided in Canada, the late Bishop Hubert objected strongly to remit to the government a list of the nominations made to parishes, and as we believed that prelate entirely guided by the present coadjutor, that refusal was regarded by the most zealous subjects of His Majesty in the country as one of the numerous reasons which placed M. Plessis in a doubtful position with respect to his loyalty towards Great Britain".

DUKE of KENT to SIR R. PRESCOTT,

16th October, 1797.

Quoted by Ferland, page 26 (English.)

Mr. Peel (afterwards Sir Robert Peel) on Canada in 1810.

"I yesterday had my first interview with Mr. Peel, the U.S.S., who received me with great attention, and who, though a very young man, and but a few days in office, appears to be very much *au fait* in matters of public business".

"When I observed to Mr. Peel that you hold with you all the English inhabitants, and consequently all the commercial interest of the country, he remarked that the

Canadians were much more *numerous*, and he repeated the same remark more than once in a way that indicated a fear of doing anything that might clash with the prejudices of the *more numerous* part of the community".

RYLAND to Governor CRAIG.

London, August 4th, 1810.

Christie's History of Canada, (*page 124.*)

Mr. Ryland (*Government Secretary at Quebec*) **on Plessis.**

"Although there are few men more ambitious or more effectually zealous in the exercise of religious functions than this ecclesiastic, I have no idea that either his zeal or his ambition would induce him to make resistance to the firm exercise of the Royal Prerogative....."

24th July, 1811. RYLAND to SIR E. PREVOST.

Plessis on the American Invasion of Canada, 1813.

"Warriors, yours is the duty to stand like a wall against the attacks of the enemy.....For you, priests, clerks, old men, women, invalids, children, all you who are unable to serve as soldiers, do not wait in barren anxiety the development of the war. Join in heart and spirit with me your chief pastor. Serve your country all you can whether in private prayer at home or in church before the altar. Lift up your souls to God. Assault Heaven with a holy violence.

Mandement, November 11th, 1813.

Lord Bathurst (*Secretary of State for Colonies*) **on the Canadian Catholic claims**

" Whatever opinions may be entertained with respect to the adoption of measures for restraining the Catholic church in the province, or reducing its lately acquired superiority, I am sure that you will feel with me that the moment at which His Majesty's Canadian subjects are making the most meritorious exertions in defence of the province, against the enemy, is not the most auspicious for bringing forward any changes which they might, however erroneously, consider as trenching upon the privileges of their church ".

LORD BATHURST to BISHOP MOUNTAIN,
(Protestant Bishop of Quebec.)

December 27th, 1813.

Lord Dalhousie's letter to Bishop Panet, on the death of Plessis, 1825.

" The people of this province of all classes of society have rendered justice to his virtues and his character; the church has lost a venerable prelate; the people a firm and indefatigable guardian of its spiritual interests; the king a loyal and faithful subject. As the representative of His Majesty in this place, I am particularly happy to acknowledge his continual attention and kind acts to me personally; they have produced that harmony, which existed in all our relations, and you may judge that I experience a sincere grief together with the whole country in this sad circumstance ".

Epitre à Monseigneur J.-O. Plessis
Evêque de Québec
lors de son passage en France

Dis le moi franchement, Prélat du Nouveau Monde,
Faut-il louer ton zèle ou faut-il qu'on le fronde ?
. . . . . .
Lorsque le Nouveau Monde est heureux par tes soins
Pourquoi d'un monde usé prévenir les besoins ?
. . . . . .
Devais-tu donc, guidé par une sainte envie,
Pour visiter nos morts, sacrifier ta vie ;
Pour fixer une fois le pompeux Vatican,
Franchir deux fois les monts, et deux fois l'Océan
Et, pour un jour heureux que ta présence assure,
D'un siècle de regrets nous offrir la mesure ?
Devais-tu donc enfin passer à si grand prix
Des Français de Québec aux Hurons de Paris !
. . . . . .

J. Mermet.

Marseilles, 27 mars 1820.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

LIVES OF BISHOP PLESSIS.

NOTICE BIOGRAPHIQUE sur Monseigneur Joseph-Octave Plessis, Évêque de Québec. Dans le *Foyer Canadien*, Tome I, 1863, pages 70-318.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE of Joseph-Octave Plessis, Bishop of Quebec. Translated by T. B. French from the original by l'abbé Ferland, published in the *Foyer Canadien*. Quebec, 1864, 177 pages. Translator's preface, 5 pages.

MONSEIGNEUR PLESSIS, par L.-O. David, Montréal, 1872, 35 pages. Portrait.

MGR JOSEPH-OCTAVE PLESSIS, Évêque de Québec, par l'abbé Ferland, avec notes et rectifications. Québec, 1878, 288 pages.

VIE DE MGR PLESSIS. In les *Mandements des Evêques de Québec*, t. III, Québec, 1888, 8 pages.

LES ÉVÊQUES DE QUÉBEC, par Mgr. Têtu. Québec, 1889. Vie de Mgr Plessis, 68 pages.

WRITINGS OF BISHOP PLESSIS

DISCOURS à l'occasion de la victoire remportée par les forces navales de Sa Majesté Britannique dans la Méditerrannée le 1 et 2 août 1798, sur la flotte française,

prononcé dans l'Église Cathédrale de Québec le 10 janvier 1799 par Messire J.-O. Plessis curé de Québec, Coadjuteur-élu et Vicaire général du Diocèse. Précédé du Mandement de Mgr l'illustrissime et révérendissime P., évêque de Québec. A Québec, imprimé au profit des pauvres de la paroisse, et se vend à l'imprimerie. (1799)

Second edition. Quebec, 1905.

Third edition, in an English translation by Sir Henri G. Joly de Lotbinière. Quebec, 1906.

ORAISON FUNÈBRE DE MGR JEAN-OLIVIER BRIAND, ancien évêque de Québec, par l'abbé Joseph-Octave Plessis, prononcé le 7 juin, 1794. Lévis, Pierre-George Roy, 1906.

CANADIAN ARCHIVES, 1902. See pages 23, 27 for the conversation between Plessis and Attorney-General Sewell, reported by the latter to Sir R. Milnes, 26 April, 1805.

MANDEMENTS, Lettres pastorales et circulaires des évêques de Québec, t. III, par Mgr Têtu et l'abbé Gagnon. Québec, 1888. Mgr Plessis, 1806-1825.

VOYAGES dans le golfe Saint-Laurent et les provinces d'en bas en 1811 et 1812, par Mgr Joseph-Octave Plessis. Québec, 1903. 204 pages. Avant-propos des éditeurs, 3 pages.

JOURNAL des visites pastorales de 1815 et 1816 par Mgr Joseph-Octave Plessis, évêque de Québec, publié par Mgr Henri Têtu. Québec, 1903.

JOURNAL d'un voyage en Europe par Mgr Joseph-Octave Plessis, évêque de Québec, en 1819-1820. Publié par Mgr Henri Têtu. Québec, 1903.